

NBC BRIEFING

9 October 1957

SOVIET EARTH SATELLITE: CIA STATEMENTS TO NBC

I. 9 November 1956, Planning Board memorandum to NSC:

"The IAC in NIE 11-6-56, Capabilities and Trends in Soviet Science and Technology, has estimated that the USSR has the basic scientific capabilities, technical skills and other resources to develop, build and launch an unmanned earth satellite vehicle. The IAC Guided Missiles Intelligence Committee has estimated that the USSR could orbit a satellite by early 1957. In addition, numerous official and semi-official Soviet statements indicate that the USSR is eager to be the first to orbit an earth satellite and is engaged in an extensive earth satellite program. However, there is insufficient firm evidence regarding the priority attached to this program to permit an estimate of precisely when the USSR will orbit an earth satellite. For planning purposes, it would be prudent to assume that the USSR will orbit a satellite with limited instrumentation for scientific purposes at any time after early 1957."

II. 26 January 1957, DCI briefing of NSC:

"The USSR will probably make a major effort to be the first country to orbit an earth satellite. On the basis of our estimate of Soviet guided missile capabilities, we believe that the USSR possesses the basic technical capabilities, skills, and other resources required to develop, build, and orbit an unmanned satellite vehicle."

DOCUMENT NO.	13
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DECLASSIFIED	
CLASS. CHANGED TO	25X1
NEXT REVIEW DATE	
DATE	7/2/80
REVIEWER	

III. 10 May 1957, DCI briefing of NSC:

"As you know, the IAC has just issued the National Intelligence Estimate 11-5-57 covering Soviet capabilities in the guided missile field. In the development of this estimate, the intelligence community agreed that the USSR has a capability of orbiting in 1957 a satellite vehicle which would require scientific information and data of limited military value."

"We continue to feel very strongly that the Soviets will make every effort to place a satellite in orbit during the period of the International Geophysical Year. The international psychological impact of being first in this field would undoubtedly weigh very heavily in their program planning."